

# A gender perspective on career challenges experienced by African scientists

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# Background

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- A general lack of empirical knowledge of scientists in Africa
- Patriarchy pervades the majority of African societies
  - Gender-based divisions of labour
  - Access to power and resources
- What are these and other challenges affecting (young) women scientists' research performance and their retention?

# Young Scientists in Africa



# The Young Scientists in Africa Project: phases and funders



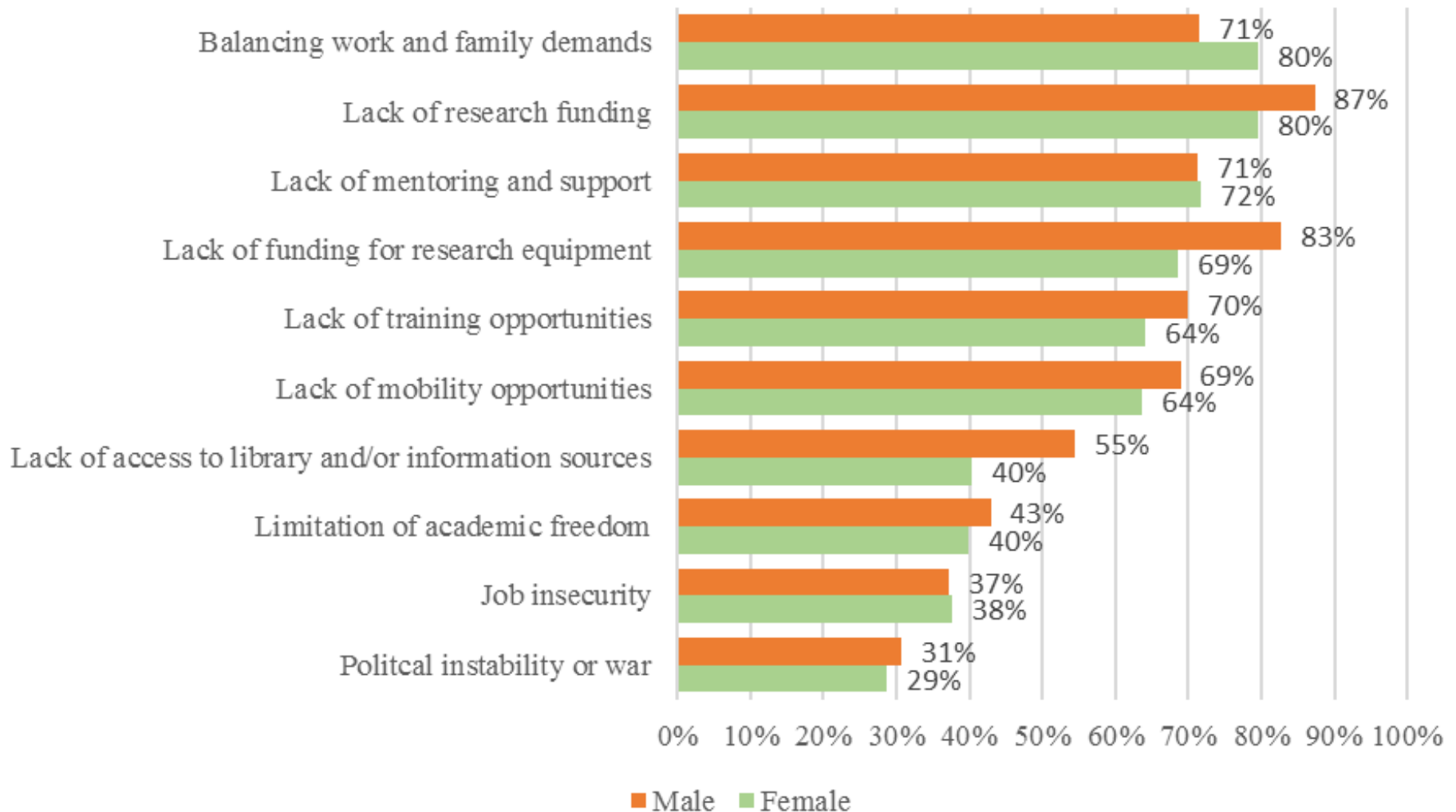
Robert Bosch **Stiftung**

# Research methods

- Strategy: primarily quantitative
- Design: survey (web-based)
- Definition of population (African scientists)
- Identifying and contacting potential respondents
- Data collection
- Data analysis



## A comparison between women and men scientists in terms of their experience of career challenges



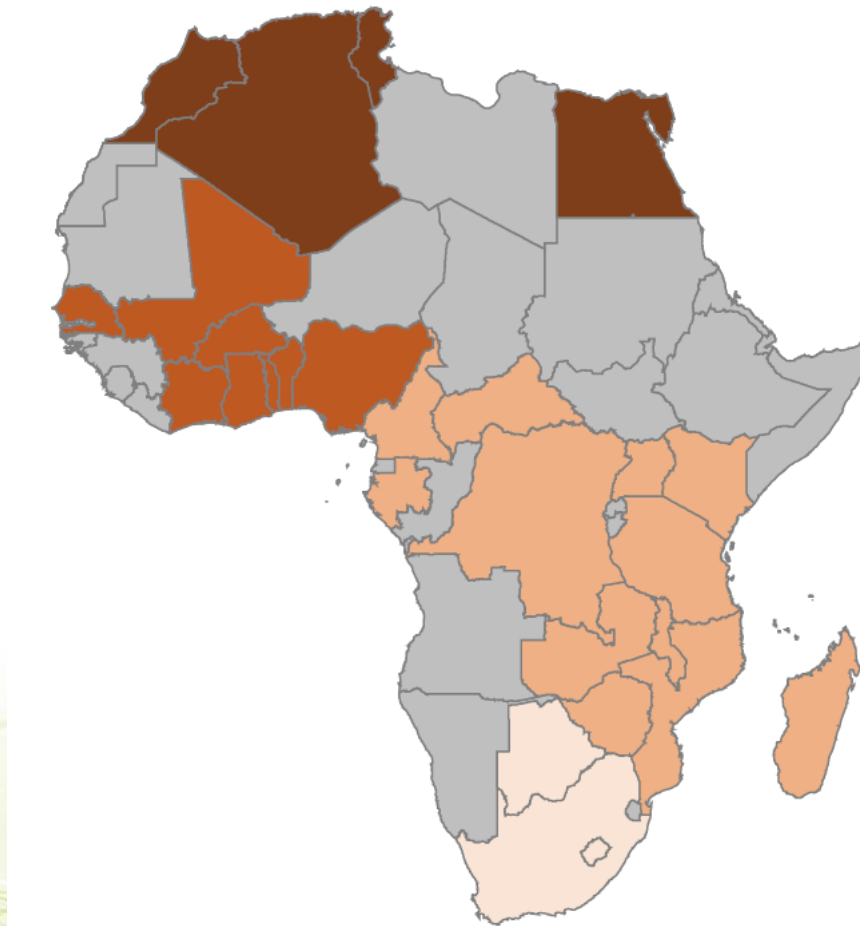
# Younger women compared to older women

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- Not more likely to have experienced financial-resource deficits as a career challenge
- But do, on average, obtain less funding
- Much more likely to have experienced job insecurity as a career challenge
- In general have experienced more challenges, and/or to a greater extent

# Women scientists' career-challenge score, by region

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# Field differences

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- Those qualified in fields where women are proportionately under-represented, are on average most likely to have experienced career-related challenges
  - Engineering and applied technologies, and the natural and agricultural sciences
  - Resonates with the literature
- Job insecurity is a career challenge especially in the health sciences
- The challenge of balancing work and family is most salient amongst women scientists in the humanities

# Prioritising interventions

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- Work–family role conflict
  - Fundamental change required in the smallest unit of societal organisation
  - Employing institutions cannot remain gender neutral
- Women who are qualified in fields that constitute a predominantly male milieu
- Job security among younger women scientists & those in the health sciences
- North African & West African countries

# Thank you

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